

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for facilitating driving of a vehicle, the system comprising in combination:

a rear mounted mirror assembly and a vehicle body having front end, first and second side walls and a rear wall, the rear mounted mirror assembly comprising:

5 a mirror arm having a mirror holding portion and a mounting portion;
a mirror unit mechanically coupled to the mirror holding portion of the mirror arm; and

10 a mounting bracket having a first portion that is fixed to the vehicle body adjacent to a region where the rear wall and one of the first and second side walls of the vehicle meet, the mounting bracket having a mirror arm holding portion that defines a receiving opening in which the mounting portion of the mirror arm is pivotally supported, the mirror unit being so mounted that the mirror unit is at least partially disposed outwardly relative to both the first side wall and the rear wall of the vehicle with the mounting arm having a range of movement so that it can swing
15 the mirror unit toward either the first side wall or the rear wall of the vehicle from a normal position of the mirror unit.

2. The system of claim 1, in which the mirror arm is sufficiently pivotable to locate the mirror arm and mirror unit adjacent either the first sidewall or the rear wall.

3. The system of claim 1, in which the mirror unit has a convex mirror surface.

- 13 -

4. The system of claim 1, in which the mounting bracket is mounted to the first side wall of the vehicle.

5. The system of claim 1, in which the mirror unit is so located that it is capable of reflecting an image from an area facing the rear wall of the vehicle to a first side view mirror that is mounted to the vehicle, adjacent a region thereof where a driver is seated.

6. The system of claim 2, including a stopper fixed to the vehicle body to cushion contact between the vehicle body and the mirror assembly, when the mirror assembly is pivoted away from its normal position.

7. The system of claim 1, further including a swivel connection mechanism that connects the mirror unit to a terminal end of the mirror arm.

8. The system of claim 1, further including a detent mechanism in the mounting bracket for defining a normal position for the mounting arm of the mirror unit.

9. The system of claim 1, in which the mounting arm is shaped to protect the mirror unit against contacting obstructions.

10. The system of claim 1, in which the mounting arm has at least three sections that are bent relative to one another.

- 14 -

11. The system of claim 1, including an electrically operable system for pivoting the mounting arm of the mirror from its normal position when an obstruction is electrically detected.

12. The system of claim 1, further including a return mechanism which is structured to exert a mechanical force on the mirror arm to return to the normal position.

13. The system of claim 12, in which the return mechanism comprises a spring mounted to exert a mechanical force between the mounting bracket and the mounting arm to rotate the mounting arm to the normal position.

14. The system of claim 13, in which the spring is mounted on a terminal portion of the mounting arm and the arm is provided with a pin that is designed to slide relative to a cutout in the bracket in a manner which restores the mounting arm to the normal position.

15. The system of claim 14, in which the cutout is V-shaped.

16. The system of claim 14, in which the pin is V-shaped.

17. The system of claim 14, further including a sleeve provided on part of the bracket and the cutout is provided in the sleeve.

18. The system of claim 1, in which the mounting bracket is mounted to the vehicle via an intermediate mounting hardware that enables the mounting

- 15 -

bracket to slide relative to the first side wall of the vehicle in a direction toward the front end of the vehicle.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the intermediate mounting hardware comprises a sliding channel in which a portion of the mounting bracket is slidably received.

20. The system of claim 19, in which the sliding channel is comprised of a pair of adjacent and parallel channels and the mounting bracket comprises first and second portions which are slidably received in the pair of sliding channels to enable the mounting bracket to resist twisting forces.

21. The system of claim 1, including an apparatus for maintaining the mirror unit behind the vehicle during the normal driving conditions when the vehicle is not being backed up.

22. A driving facilitating system comprising in combination, a rear mounted mirror assembly and a vehicle body having front end, first and second side walls and a rear wall, the rear mounted mirror assembly comprising:

a mirror arm having a mirror holding portion and a mounting portion;

5 a mirror unit mechanically coupled to the mirror holding portion of the mirror arm; and

a mounting bracket fixed to the vehicle body adjacent to a region where the rear wall and one of the first and second side walls of the vehicle meet, the mounting bracket defining a sliding channel and the mirror arm being received in the
10 sliding channel and being biased within the sliding channel to protrude toward the rear wall of the vehicle, but enabling the mirror arm and mirror unit attached thereto

- 16 -

to slide toward the front end of the vehicle when the mirror unit is contacted by an obstruction.

23. The system of claim 22, in which the mounting bracket defines a pair of parallel sliding channels and the mirror arm comprises first and second portions that are received in the pair of sliding channels and slide therein a manner which resists twisting of the mirror arm.